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A Midsummer Night's Dream

SELWYN HOUSE SENIOR PLAYERS

SYNOPSIS

As Theseus (Duke of Athens) and his bride-to-be Hippolyta (Queen of the Amazons) are planning the festivities for their forthcoming wedding, Egeus (a rich Athenian) enters with his daughter (Hermia), Lysander, and Demetrius (her two suitors). Because his daughter loves Lysander and refuses to marry Demetrius, Egeus demands that Theseus enforce the law. Theseus warns Hermia that by the next new moon she must either marry Demetrius, take a vow of eternal chastity, or be put to death. Later, Hermia and Lysander decide to take refuge with Lysander's aunt, outside the jurisdiction of Athens. Hermia tells their plan to her closest friend Helena, and Helena passes the secret on to Demetrius, her former lover.

A company of craftsmen plan a play as part of the entertainment for Theseus' wedding. They assign the parts and then agree to rehearse in a wood near the city.

In Act II, Puck, a servant to Oberon, speaks to a goblin who serves Titania. He reveals that his master, Oberon (King of the Fairies), and Titania (his Queen) have been quarreling over a little Indian Boy, whom both wish to have in their retinues. Oberon and Titania enter and quarrel anew. Later, Oberon orders Puck to procure a flower, the juice of which anointed on a person's eyes causes him to fall in love with the first creature he sees. Oberon wishes to humiliate Titania by making her fall in love with some unworthy creature, thereby compelling her to relinquish the boy.

Demetrius arrives, searching for the fleeing lovers. Helena follows him closely, but he spurns her. Oberon, seeing Helena's unhappiness, commands Puck to anoint the eyes of a man in Athenian garments, unaware that there are two such men in the wood.

Titania's attendants sing her to sleep, and Oberon afterward anoints her eyes. Lysander and Hermia, weary after a long walk, decide to rest in a clearing near Titania's flowery bed. Puck discovers them, and, thinking that Lysander is the man Oberon described, anoints his eyes with the juice. Helena enters, pursuing Demetrius, who makes his escape. Lysander, awakened by their noise, immediately falls in love with Helena. Helena feels that he is mocking her and runs away, with Lysander following. Hermia awakes from a nightmare to find herself alone.

At the beginning of Act III, the craftsmen meet to rehearse their play. Puck, discovering them, frightens them away and gives Bottom an ass's head. Bottom's friends all flee when they see his transformation. Bottom, still unaware of the

transformation, walks manfully up and down, singing defiantly. Titania, awakened by the song, immediately falls in love with Bottom and summons her fairy attendants to wait upon him.

Puck returns to report his success. Oberon is displeased to find, when Demetrius and Hermia enter, that Puck has anointed the wrong Athenian. He dispatches Puck to bring Helena into Demetrius' sight; then he anoints Demetrius' eyes. Helena enters with Lysander; and Demetrius, seeing Helena, begins to make his own passionate declarations to Helena. Hermia enters, bewildered by Lysander's desertion. Helena, however, thinks that all three have conspired to make fun of her. Lysander and Demetrius threaten each other, while Helena and Hermia squabble. Puck lures Demetrius and Lysander away, then goes to seek the antidote to the love charm, in order to restore Lysander's love for Hermia. This done, Helena will have her Demetrius, and Hermia will have her Lysander.

Act IV finds Titania and her attendants waiting upon Bottom. Oberon and Puck enter just as the Fairy Queen and her love fall asleep. Oberon applies the antidote, and Titania awakens with only a dim recollection of her enchantment. Bottom is restored to his normal state, and Titania and Oberon dance together before leaving.

Theseus, Hippolyta, and Egeus enter, encountering the sleeping, young lovers. Egeus identifies each one before the huntsmen's horns awaken them all. When Theseus questions the lovers about their presence, they reveal what they can remember of the night's confused events. Theseus decrees that they shall marry when he and Hippolyta wed.

Alone, Bottom also awakens with a vague recollection of his adventures, which he believes to have been a dream. As the other players puzzle over Bottom's disappearance, he appears and urges them to prepare for their performance which he is sure will be requested at the duke's wedding.

In Act V, the three pairs of lovers, having been married, prepare for the evening's entertainment. After some consideration of the various offerings, Theseus selects the interlude Bottom and his companions have prepared. Their bungling enactment of "Pyramus and Thisby," comic rather than tragic, provides an amusing finale to an evening of delight.

—Adapted from Summaries in the Folger Edition

SELWYN HOUSE SENIOR PLAYERS

Mendelssohn's Overture and Incidental Music

to

A Midsummer Night's Dream

The young Felix Mendelssohn shared the enthusiasm of his family and friends for the plays of Shakespeare, which had recently become accessible in fine German verse written by August Wilhelm Schlegel, the great German Romantic.

Felix and his sister Fanny were caught up in July of 1827—when Felix was only sixteen—in a plan to "dream and midsummer night's dream" in the magical garden of their parents' home. Only a month later Felix finished the Overture, a unique stroke of genius and arguably his greatest single work. Incidentally, the original version of the work was for piano four hands: Felix wrote it for himself and Fanny to play.

In the orchestral version, four long, sustained wind chords lead into Oberon's moonlit fairy kingdom. The movements of the fairies appear in delicate, quick passage work from strings and woodwinds. This fairy music, as danced in many nineteenth-century productions featuring ballerinas as the fairies, is widely credited with formulating our modern idea that fairies are tiny ballerinas like Tinkerbell in *Peter Pan* . The overture represents all the elements of the play, including love, wandering through the dark forest, falling asleep, magic spells, the dancing of the mechanicals, and—most famous of all—the hee-haws of Bottom (who in the middle of the play finds his head transformed into that of an ass). The overture ends with the same sustained chords with which it began.

There was a gap of seventeen years between the composition of the overture and that of the rest of the incidental music, but Mendelssohn was nonetheless able to extend the musical ideas of the overture into a unified musical whole in response to a commission for the birthday of the King of Prussia. The first performance of the play with Mendelssohn's music took place on October 14, 1843. Since then, the incidental music has been acknowledged as the finest music written to accompany any spoken drama. The most famous part of the incidental music is the Wedding March preceding Act V. Until about fifteen years ago, it was the standard recessional music for weddings. Like the other numbers from the set, this fine march deserves a re-hearing, having been considered "old hat" for some years.

FAIRIES, also called Goblins or Sprites.

Fairies were once believed to be supernormal beings that inhabited this world or a magical kingdom lying near or below it. Fairies were akin to men, but they were not human, nor were they pure spirits. The fairies of the past were feared as dangerous and powerful, sometimes friendly but often cruel or mischievous—capable of magically transforming human beings and themselves. They were organized in clans, with their own kings, queens, and armies, and lived in subterranean palaces reached through caves or through gates magically opening in green hillsides. They passed their time in hunting, riding in procession, feasting, dancing, and occasionally warring against rival clans. One of their most dreaded habits was that of stealing human babies and substituting a child of their own, so that it might have the benefit of human milk. Such a changeling could be recognized by its odd appearance.

—*Encyclopedia Britannica*

LUNACY

Lunacy is insanity—especially that associated with the foolish excesses of love—marked by lucid periods, according to the varying influence of the moon (Luna or Diana).

FAMOUS LINES

The course of true love never did run smooth (I.i.136).

Ill met by moonlight, proud Titania (II.i.61).

Lord, what fools these mortals be! (III.ii.116).

The lunatic, the lover, and the poet
Are of imagination all compact.
(V.i.89-90)

The lover . . . / Sees Helen's beauty in a brow of Egypt
(V.i.11-21).

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SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

Overture

Mendelssohn, Felix. Overture to
A Midsummer Night's Dream, Op. 21 (1827)

Act I

Scene 1. Athens. The palace of Theseus.
Scene 2. Athens. Quince's house.

Act II

Scene 1. A wood near Athens.
Scene 2. Another part of the wood.

Act III

Scene 1. The same part of the wood. Titania lying asleep.
Scene 2. Another part of the wood.

INTERMISSION
(15-20 minutes)

Act IV

Scene 1. The wood. Lysander, Demetrius, Helena, and Hermia all lying asleep.
Scene 2. Athens. Quince's house.

Act V

Scene 1. Athens. The palace of Theseus.

CAST
(in Order of Appearance)

Theseus	Anthony Brown
Hippolyta	Virginia Ferguson
Egeus	Paul Starke
Hermia	Emily Saxe
Demetrius	Warren Valdmanis
Lysander	Sean Gilman
Helena	Peggy Ferguson
Quince	Hugh McGuire
Bottom	David James
Flute	Michael Henderson
Starveling	Ian Kronish
Snout	Richard Slatter
Snug	Colin Robertson
Puck	Steven Schelling
Goblin	Maurice Gibbs
Oberon	Robbie Johnston
Titania	Verena Sixt
Sprite 1 (Hawthorn Bush)	Jordan Ray
Sprite 2 (Peaseblossom)	Ethan Tobman
Mustardseed	Scott Gentles
Moth	Marcel Guay
Cobweb	Oliver Melisiotis
Philostrate	Paul Starke

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SELWYN HOUSE SENIOR PLAYERS

The Company of Players

Prologue (Quince)	Hugh McGuire
Pyramus (Bottom)	David James
Thisby (Flute)	Michael Henderson
Wall (Snout)	Richard Slatter
Lion (Snug)	Colin Roberston
Moon (Starveling)	Ian Kronish

Oberon's Train

Steven Schelling

Joel Guinness, Paul Laperrière, Tom Mackay, Neil Mathews, Tiga Sontag, Nicholas Synnott, Julian Wainwright

Titania's Train

Maurice Gibbs

Scott Gentles, Marcel Guay, Oliver Melisiotis, Ethan Tobman

Marc Andersen, Mark Bridgman, Tim Daly, Ian Hodkinson, Kierra O'Regan

PRODUCTION STAFF

Director and Designer	Byron Harker
Technical Producer	Marc Krushelnyski
Production Supervisor	Virginia Ferguson
Costume Design and Production	Mary Ellen Viau Mary Guay, Sue Mann
Stage Manager	Prosanto Chaudhury
Assistant Stage Manager	Michael Echenberg
Make-Up	Carol Manning

Sally Blyth, Isabel Buzelan, Judy Clark,
Blake Ferger, George Ferger,
Mary Ferger, Peggy Ferguson, Virginia Ferguson,
Kathy Funamoto, Caroline Guay, Mary Guay,
Nancy Hodge, Christine Krushelnyski,
Dorothy Martin, Paula Shannon, Deborah Shatia,
Helaine Tecks, Pauline Tierney, Tania Vialls

Sound and Synthesizer Music	Willy Dodge
Stage Construction and Painting, and Lighting Installation	Marc Krushelnyski

Dylan Adair, Prosanto Chaudhury,
Jim Cousins, Michael Echenberg,
Peggy Ferguson, Maurice Gibbs, Byron Harker,
Ian Hodkinson, David James, Kit Pasold,
Julian Wainwright, Karl Werleman,
Simplicio Urgel, Peter Vialls, Tania Vialls

Stage Crew	Maurice Gibbs, The Goblins
Special Effects	Kit Pasold
Properties Manager	David James
Lighting Crew	Dylan Adair, Lucas Carsley
Spotlight	Charles Tingley
Video Cameramen	Roger Nincheri, Richard Sabbagh
Choreographer	Isabel Buzelan
Line Coach	Jim Willett
Publicity, Tickets, and House Manager	Matt Cohen

Andrew Blundell, Tony Browne, Robert Geller,
Joel Guinness, Steve Issley, David Levenson,
Alex Novak, Andrew Raisman, Stuart Rutledge,
Ronald Simpson, John Taylor

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Silhouette: Cupid	David James
Painting: The Three Fates (Spinning, Measuring and Cutting the Tread of Life)	Mark Rusko
Silhouette: Theseus and the Minotaur	Sara Colby, David James
Silhouette: Titania and Bottom	Gabrielle Pilot
Silhouette: Fairy	Nha Voduc
Silhouette: Artemis (Diana), the Huntress	Nha Voduc
Forest Curtains	Joann Mitchell Will Mitchell
Temple Curtains	Jo-Anne Harvey
Costume and Backstage Crew	
Isabel Buzelan, Christine Krushelnyski, Joann Mitchell, Roman Pylat, Leigh Seville, Bonnie Weppler, David Williams	
Foliage	N. D. G. Florists
Programme	Byron Harker
Prosanto Chaudhury, Geoff Dowd, Michael Echenberg	
Programme & Ticket Design and Production	Selwyn House Publications
Posters	David James, Mark Rusko
Photography and Advertising Marquee	Monty Krindle
Cueing Script	Damion Stodola
Stars	Grade 2A Helaine Tecks
Swing Pipe	Dieter Rupp

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Thanks and Love to Marc and Christine Krushelnyski.

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